



DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

News Release

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For Immediate Release: **September 15, 2004**

HISTORIC LAND TRANSFER TO BENEFIT NATIVE HAWAIIANS AND ALL HAWAII RESIDENTS

HONOLULU – The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) announced today the transfer of 1,800 acres of land to the department, with the potential for 3,500 homes for native Hawaiians, is historic. The transfer is made up of four properties on three islands, utilizes stalled ceded lands and involves the cooperative efforts of three state agencies and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA).

“This is a major breakthrough because of the size of the land transfer, the number of agencies working together, and the overall potential to have such a positive impact on the lives of so many people,” said Micah Kane, chair of the Hawaiian Homes Commission. “It shows the continuing commitment of the Lingle-Aiona Administration to native Hawaiians in a manner that is beneficial for all of Hawaii. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), the Housing Community Development Corporation of Hawaii (HCDCH), the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and DHHL all needed to work together to make this happen and we did.”

(more)

Kane added, "We are moving forward on lands that have been stagnant for years. We will create economic opportunity with construction, have a tremendous impact on affordable housing, provide homes for people who normally would not have that opportunity, fulfill our commitment to native Hawaiians, and build communities that will impact the lives of generations to come. This is good for everyone in Hawaii."

The properties being transferred to DHHL are: the Villages of Laiopua in Kona (excluding Villages 9&10), the Villages of Leialii 1A and 1B in Lahaina, Village 8 in Kapolei, and Waiahole Valley on Oahu.

Kane said the Villages of Laiopua has potential for more than 2,700 units while Leialii on Maui and Village 8 in Kapolei have 304 and 326 potential units respectively. HCDCH had the Villages of Leialii and Village 8 in its inventory as well as the development rights to the Villages of Laiopua. DLNR held the land at Laiopua. Both Laiopua and Leialii are ceded lands.

"The Lingle-Aiona Administration is committed to fulfilling its obligation to native Hawaiians and Governor Lingle's support allowed us to look outside the department's current land inventory to address this issue in a more creative fashion," Kane said. "Our ability to move forward on the ceded lands issue is strengthened by the support of OHA. We presented our plans to the Trustees and we are moving forward with their blessing."

According to OHA Chair Haunani Apoliona, the transfer of lands is fully consistent with its lawsuit pending before the Hawaii Supreme Court. "The transfer of these lands to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands for purpose of developing new homes for Native Hawaiians serves the direct purpose that the lawsuit has been designed to achieve, namely to protect these lands for Native Hawaiians," said Apoliona.

Late last year, the DHHL approached the HCDCH to initiate discussion for the transfer of properties at the Villages of Leialii in Lahiana, Maui, the Villages of Laiopua in Kona, Hawaii, and Village 8 in Kapolei. Subsequent discussions led to Waiahole Valley being included in the transfer.

This year the HCDCH board directed its staff to carry out the transfer of Village 8 in Kapolei, Villages 1A and 1B in Leialii and Waiahole Valley, and the development rights to Laiopua. In the last few weeks, the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) approved the transfer of land at Laiopua and Waiahole Valley. OHA's support came during their board meeting in the latter part of August.

As part of the transfer agreement, DHHL will pay \$2.2 million dollars a year for 15 years, for a total of \$33 million dollars, to reimburse HCDCH for some of its infrastructure costs at Leialii, Laiopua, and Village 8. While the payment does not cover the total cost HCDCH has invested into the properties, DHHL is in a prime position to develop the properties and support the state goal of providing affordable housing. Most of the 3,500 expected units will be considered affordable and target native Hawaiians who are at 80 percent or below the median income level.

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